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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN'S DIPLOMACY

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage July 17 on the crash of a Taiwan army AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopter; on the government's relaxation of regulations governing cross-Straits matters; and on Tropical Storm Kalmaegi. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed in the pro-unification "United Daily News" said that, given that cross-Straits relations are in different circumstances from before, Taipei should be wise about diplomatic competition with China, and perhaps President Ma Ying-jeou should for the United States' help in consolidating Taiwan's diplomatic relations with Paraguay. End summary.

"Contest-of-Wits Diplomacy, Using Wisdom to Find Ways"

Chen Yu-chun, a Taiwan academic and now a senior research fellow at China's Tsinghua University, opined in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (7/17):

"... [Taiwan's President] Ma Ying-jeou is set to visit South America in August to consolidate [Taiwan's] diplomatic relations with Paraguay. However, the degree of difficulty in terms of handling [the task to consolidate Taiwan's relations with Paraguay] is formidable. The leftist Paraguayan government which is about to take office has great interest in establishing diplomatic ties with Beijing. [What if] new [Paraguayan] President [Fernando Lugo] proposes the request [of establishing diplomatic ties to Beijing]; can Beijing reject the request? Can Taipei lambast this as 'China's suppression' [of Taiwan's diplomacy]? On the other hand, [the prospect for Taiwan's diplomacy] is not dim at all. Maybe Ma could win using the 'Nicaragua model,' in which Nicaragua suspended its establishment of diplomatic ties with Beijing but strengthened practical economic and trade relations with China. Recently, there has been an argument that the United States is suspending arms sales to Taiwan in order not to sabotage the atmosphere on the eve of the Beijing Olympic Games. Another argument alleges that Taipei took the initiative to suspend arms procurement from the United States in order to maintain improving cross-Straits relations. If the latter argument is true, Ma will have room to maneuver, because showing goodwill to reconcile [with China] may make Beijing persuade Paraguay to suspend the establishment of diplomatic ties [between China and Paraguay]. On the other hand, Ma could ask for the United States' help by using leverage on Paraguay, more or less, because the United States has military bases in Paraguay. (sic) ..."

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